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ABSTRACT

The views of proponents and opponents of the language deficit theory--the theory that nonstandard dialect is a deficient form of language--are presented in this paper. Following a description of the work of Basil Bernstein, a British educator who is considered the key figure among proponents of the theory, the paper presents an overview of the work of four other British proponents--Frieda Goldman-Eisler, Lorna Bell, and D. M. and G. A. Gahagan--and of four prominent United States proponents--Benjamin Bloom, Carl Bereiter, Siegfried Engelmann, and Martin Deutsch--all of whom advocate compensatory education for children labeled as culturally deprived. It also mentions the related work of Hilda Taba and Deborah Elkins and the controversial work of Arthur Jensen, whose conclusions pointed to the existence of language deficiencies among minority children. The paper then presents the views of scholars who reject the entire notion of language deficiency. Those in this group whose work is summarized are William Labov, the foremost opponent of the theory; Walter Wolfram; Susan Houston; and Joan and Stephen Baratz. Finally, the paper cites research that points to the damaging effects of teachers' negative attitudes toward disadvantaged students, and it discusses Herbert Ginsburg's work, which counters results that point to deficiences among disadvantaged children. Twenty-two related studies are listed and annotated. (GT)

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A REPORT ON TWO VIEWS OF THE DEFICIT THEORY OF LANGUAGE

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A Report on Two Views of
the Deficit Theory of Language

Educators have long noted and been disturbed by the fact that significant numbers of students who have passed through the primary and secondary grades of the public school system are functionally illiterate. What are the causes behind the large number of non-readers among our youth? There are no simple solutions but many theories. This paper shall examine one such theory, that of language deficiency in young children as an indicator of future reading difficulties. Among educators there are those that accept and expound upon the deficit theory of language. An equal number of scholars reject and criticize the theory as being harmful to the educational development of children. The controversy still rages.

Perhaps the key figure among the proponents of the language deficit theory is Basil Bernstein, the British educator and sociologist. Almost all of the present programs in Europe and America which are predicated upon a deficit theory of language rely to some extent on the ideas of Bernstein and in particular his notion of the restricted and elaborated codes of speech.

Bernstein (1971) began his career in education in the 1940's working with settlement houses and boys clubs in the working class sections of London and other urban centers. He studied both at the London School of Economics and the Department of Phonetics at the University of London. To support himself through these years of graduate study he continued to teach school in the poorer sections of London. It was these early experiences which later stimulated Bernstein to theorize and write about the social class differences of language (1971, p.6).

In developing the idea of a restricted and elaborated code for language, Bernstein sought to explain the language performance differences of children from various social classes. His personal experiences as a teacher and later research in sociology and linguistics led him to distinguish between the

speech mode of the middle class and that of the working class in England. The latter he labeled restricted code, the former elaborated code.

The differences between these two codes form the foundation for the deficit theory, although Bernstein himself does not subscribe to all of the generalizations associated with the idea of a language deficient group. Rather, he sought to describe what he saw as the differences between the users of a restricted code and the users of an elaborated code.

For Bernstein, the middle class child is raised in an "ordered, structured, rational environment (p. 25)." As such his speech is formal, expressive, structured and capable of expressing a wide variety of cognitive ideas. This Bernstein calls the elaborated code. It is also referred to as formal language and one which is consistent with the language spoken in most schools.

The working class child who speaks, according to Bernstein, a restricted code is less verbal at home and in school, given to emotive language, simple statements and responds best to short commands (p. 28). This code is also sometimes referred to as public language and in America as nonstandard English. It is vague in terms of time, space and long term goals. The restricted code operates best in the present and the concrete. It is characterized by grammatically simple, often times unfinished sentences and relies heavily upon a small group of conjunctions (and, so, then, because). It is a language of implicit meaning. Bernstein suggests that such a code restricts the child's ability to conceptualize which in turn inhibits curiosity, a necessary ingredient in motivating children to want to learn (p. 48).

Much of Bernstein's descriptions of the restricted and elaborated code stem from his taped observations of middle and lower class adolescents ages fifteen (15) to eighteen (18). All of the subjects were males. Among the middle class boys Bernstein noted more subordinations, complex verbs and a high proportion of personal pronouns (I). In terms of the elaborated code this indicated a higher structural and lexical level and a greater reliance on explicit statements. Working class male adoescents have a narrower lexicon, rely on concrete terms and avoid the personal pronoun "I" in favor

"you" or "they". They are rigid in their limited use of adjectives and adverbs as qualifiers. Restricted speech is characterized by a high degree of redundancy and an inability to generalize beyond the immediate social situation. This limiting nature of the restricted code is ememplified by a quote from a working class boy of sixteen (16). The youth is explaining the role of gangs in his neighborhood. "It's all according like these youths and that if they get into these gangs and that they must have a bit of a lark around and say it goes wrong and that they probably knock someone off I mean think they just do it to be big getting publicity here and there (p. 134)." In contrast to this the middle class speaker of an elaborated code can shift codes easily depending on the social situation. Meanings can be generalized and are context independent whereas the restricted code speaker is context dependent.

In describing the speech of middle and working class children according to the restricted and elaborated code model Bernstein sought to show how the class system of England had affected the nature of communication among people (p. 187). Much of Bernstein's work and ideas were influenced by the social philosophy of Karl Marx and Durkheim's work on cultural anthropology. Like Marx and Durkheim, Bernstein investigated the relationship of the individual to society. His research led him to define society in terms of language abilities which differentiated one class from another.

Support for Bernstein's theories regarding the restricted and elaborated code differences of British children can be found in the work of Frieda Goldman-Eisler (see Bernstein, 1971). Goldman-Eisler studied the speech patterns of middle class and working class children in the mid and late 1950's. Her research led to the definition of what is known as the "hesitation phenomena". This refers to the pauses that speakers make within a sentence (p. 82). Goldman-Eisler noted that working class speakers pause less than middle class speakers. Her subjects, all males between the ages of fifteen (15) and eighteen (18), were tape recorded in a discussion of capital punishment. Their speech patterns were then analyzed. Working class speakers tend to use longer phrase lengths and shorter pause durations. According to Goldman-Eisler, summarizing, abstracting, and generalizing require more and longer pauses.

In terms of the restricted and elaborated code theory she felt that the differences noted in verbal planning between middle and working class speakers was evidence in support of Bernstein's work.

The existence of the restricted and elaborated codes was taken to mean by some that the children of working class parents spoke a language that was deficient, which in turn limited their cognitive capacity and resulted in an inability to achieve academically. To remedy this situation the idea of preschool intervention or, as it is also called, compensatory education, arose. In England, two proponents on compensatory education are Lorna Bell and D. M. and G. A. Gahagan.

Bell (1972) worked with underprivileged preschool children of West Indian and Asian descent. She noticed that many of the children felt unloved, insecure and were deprived of close relationships with adult figures. This cycle of deprivation, as she called it, inhibited language growth and created academic problems as the children progressed through school (p. 5). Bell observed that these children, primarily under five years of age, were deficient in language skills that their middle class peers had mastered. The solution she felt was a mass intervention preschool program with special emphasis placed upon improving the language skills of the immigrant poor of England. The children were to be drilled in naming numbers, colors, animals, playing language games and continually emphasizing standard speech patterns and intonation.

The Gahagans (1970) adopted Bernstein's theories in their language enrichment program in London. They assumed that the language different child is at a severe disadvantage in an educational system that requires a particular language style. The older a child gets, the further behind he falls if he is a user of the restricted code. Therefore the Gahagans urged early intervention in the education of working class children. The program they developed stresses formal training in language for preschoolers. Language games are employed that emphasize following directions, conceptualizing, and categorizing within the elaborated code model (p. 33). Precise responses are required to specific questions. Spoken language is stressed as the basis for written language. As does Bell, the Gahagans believe there is something

deficient in the language of the restricted code user and therefore it must be altered to conform to the model of the elaborated code.

In the United States a number of educators have picked up on Bernstein's work and employed it in the development of their own theories and programs regarding compensatory education for those children labeled as culturally deprived. Among the foremost advocates of compensatory education in America are Benjamin Bloom, Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Engelmann, and Martin Deutsch.

Bloom (1965) defines compensatory education as "a type of education which should help the socially disadvantaged student (p. 6)." The point to be noted is that Bloom operates from a deficiency model of language. Though he takes great pain to not equate cultural deprivation with race it is clear that the model of compensatory education is geared towards underprivileged Negroes, Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans. For Bloom, linguistic development is dependent upon perceptual development which only a rich home environmen can nurture. Too often the homes of poor children do not provide the opportunity or stimulation for language development. Bloom states this thought in the following passage:

> "The size of the family, concern of the parents with the basic necessities of life, the low level of education development of the parents, the frequent absence of a male parent, and the lack of a great deal of interaction between children and adults all conspire to reduce the stimulation, language development and intellectual development of such children." (p. 15)

If the home cannot provide the necessary experiences, stimulation, and skills needed by young children to succeed in school then the school must assume this responsibility. Thus Bloom recommended in 1964 that an extensive nursery and kindergarten program geared to meet the needs of poor children be funded by the Federal government.

Bloom's ideas can be seen as part of the reaction to the racial riots in many cities in the 1960's and a response to the so-called new immigration of rural southern Blacks and Puerto Ricans to northern urban centers. The failure of many of the children from poor homes to succeed in school led Bloom and others to condlude that such children lacked the ability to "learn to learn" (p. 20). Such children, Bloom noted, were weak in auditory and visual discrimination skills, lacked abstract language concepts, and

lacked vocabulary for categorizing and naming non-concrete ideas. He saw this as a result of a home environment where communication was conveyed through gesture and other non-verbal means. Since many children from such homes were unfamiliar with the language of the school a preschool program of intervention was necessary to teach them this new language. Along with these new programs Bloom urged a renewed commitment to the training of teachers to work with children from disadvantaged homes. Project Headstart, a preschool compensatory program funded by the Federal govenment, contains many of the ideas of Bloom.

Like Basil Bernstein, Benjamin Bloom viewed the language deficiencies of children as part of a larger social problem. In 1964, at a conference on compensatory education held at the University of Chicago, Bloom and others recommended the following steps be taken:

1. A national commision be created to develop curriculum guidelines and materials for special nursery-kindergarten programs.
2. The school and communities assume responsibility for providing adequate breakfasts, lunch, work study programs and extra-curricular clubs.
3. The schools should stimulate learning in the first three grades by emphasizing mastery of simple, clear tasks; do not fail or hold back any child in the first three grades; attract excellent and empathetic teachers identify at the secondary level those superior students from culturally deprived backgrounds and provide them with special opportunities to achieve success in higher education.

Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) worked together for many years at the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children, a part of the University of Illinois at Urbana. Their research on children from a low socio-economic background led them to develop their own compensatory program for preschool education. They reasoned that since disadvantaged children fall further behind in each succeeding school year the only way these children can make progress is to begin at a faster rate of learning than their middle class peers. Working from the idea that the language of such children is deficient and must be altered immediately, Bereiter and Engelmann stress an accelerated rate of learning at the preschool level. They reject the idea that preschool should be a time to provide enrichment experiences similar

to those of the more privileged class. Instead they wanted preschool children from disadvantaged homes to engage in academic skill drills at an intensive rate. Only in this way, according to Bereiter and Engelmann, can poor children catch up academically with their advantaged peers (1966, p.9).

In effect Bereiter and Engelmann are arguing against educating the whole child. They argue that we need to choose a narrow area of learning that can be mastered in a short span of time. They are more concerned with what the child cannot do than with what he can do. The traditional nursery school program with its emphasis on play activities is not suited to the academic orientation that the poorer child needs to succeed in later school years. Supporters of a traditional preschool program find the radical approaches of Bereiter and Engelmann an anathema to their own beliefs. Bereiter and Engelmann counter this by saying:

> "The value of blocks or the sandbox for a three-year-old is no more seriously questioned than the value of the rattle for an infant. The design of Child Development Centers for Project Head Start clearly reflects this attitude. Certain materials and activities, and a certain kind of schedule are taken to play the same sufficient and healthful role in the development of poor children as they do in the development of more privileged children. To suggest that disadvantaged children may need something entirely different seems almost to suggest that they are not children, that the same laws of child development do not hold for them as for other children." (P. 16)

In their extreme, academic orientation to preschool intervention with poor children Berriter and Engelmann look to Bernstein's restricted code to explain the language deficiencies of these children. They argue that language training must be intensive because the children of the poorer class lack language "to explain, to describe, to instruct, to deduce and to test (p. 31)." Furthermore, their research led them to conclude that the speech of many deprived children does not consist of words but rather of whole phrases or sentences that function as giant words. For example, "He's a big dog" becomes "He bih daw" or the sentence "I ain't got no juice." becomes "uai ga na ju." Linguistically these giant words cannot be taken

apart by the child and recombined for the purpose of gaining information (p. 34). Words are blended with noises that take the place of words so that distinctive units cannot be reused to generate new sentences. The strict, rapid language drills of Bereiter and Engelmann force preschool children to speak in words not noises or giant words. They also stress proper inflection to aid in the expression of logical relationships which, according to Berriter and Engelmann, the disadvantaged child cannot do with his limited, restricted code.

In their primary text, Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool (1966), they outline the minimum goals they expect the disadvantaged preschool child to have mastered upon completion of their program. Some of these goals are as follows:

1. Ability to use both affirmative and not statements in reply to the question "What is this?" "This is a ball. This is not a book."
2. Ability to handle polar opposites ("If it is not _____, it must be _____") for at least four concept pairs, e.g., big-little, up-down, long-short, fat-skinny.
3. Ability to use the following prepositions correctly in statements describing arrangements of objects: on, in, under, over, between. "Where is the pencil?" "The pencil is under the book."
4. Ability to perform simple if-then deductions. The child is presented a diagram containing big squares and little squares. All the big squares are red, but the little squares are of various other colors. "If the square is big, what do you know about it?" "It's red."
5. Ability to use not and or in simple deductions.
6. Ability to name the basic colors.
7. Ability to count aloud to 20 without help.
8. Ability to recognize and name the vowels and at least 15 consonants.
9. Ability to distinguish printed words from pictures.
10. Ability to rhyme in some fashion to produce a word that rhymes with a given word. (p. 48-49)

The goal of the Bereiter and Engelmann program is in effect to teach the child a new language by imitating the middle class model. The program is intensive, fast paced and highly structured. Despite the many criticisms of the program it is widely used and imitated throughout the United States in teaching children from culturally deprived backgrounds with language deficiencies.

Martin Deutsch (1967) is another major figure in American education who translated the theories of Basil Bernstein into a program of compensatory education. Deutsch points to the role of home environment as a negative factor in shaping the linguistic and cognitive abilities of poor inner city Negro children. He stresses the deleterious effects of life in the city slums upon the mental and physical development of children (p. 40). At the Institute for Developmental Studies attached to New York University Deutsch and his colleagues studied the speech patterns and academic difficulties of Negro children. His conclusion was that environmental influences have their greatest impact on cognitive skills during the period of most rapid physical growth. As a result his preschool compensatory program stresses placing the child in a stimulating environment to encourage the development of language skills.

Deutsch's views on language deprivation are based upon his experimental studies involving Black and White first and fifth grade students from the New York City public school system. He found that in Black homes there was little parent-child interaction, which he felt accounted for the poor memory recall scores on tests given to Black children. His analysis of Black children's speech patterns was similar to that of Bernstein's description of the restricted code. Having tested hundreds of children on auditory discrimination tasks and learning ability, he concluded that the reason for poor auditory discrimination which negatively affected the skills they needed to participate in school activities. Therefore, Deutsch viewed the school as having to provide environmental compensation to these deprived children.

Basic to the research conducted by Deutsch is his method of classifying subjects as deprived. To do this he developed his own Deprivation Index which as the following paradyme: (p. 323)

Variable	Dichotomized
1. housing dilapidation in which S resides	1 = with complete plumbing but less than sound interior 2 = sound with complete plumbing
2. educational aspiration	1 = college or less 2 = graduate or professional training
3. number of children under 18	1 = 3 or more 2 = 2 or less

The Deprivation Index is used to classify subjects for the purpose of experimental studies in much the same way as Bernstein classified his subjects into middle class and working class. Deutsch's Index is open to criticism and will be discussed at a later point in this paper.

Overall Deutsch takes a milder approach to preschool compensatory education than do Bereiter and Engelmann. By providing the poor child with a healthy, positive environment in school Deutsch argues that the negative home environment can be overcome.

Hilda Taba and Deborah Elkins are two more American educators who advocate a compensatory program to aid the culturally deprived child (1966). Taba and Elkins agree with Deutsch as to the causes of the large number of Black academic failures in our school system: lack of a male figure at home, poor articulation, limited vocabulary, faulty grammar, minimal language stimulation and negative environmental conditions with little opportunity to develop cognitive skills (p. 7). Their own research into the language of lower class children revealed similarities with Bernstein's research. They found that poor children were unable to express time sequences or cause and effect relationships. To remediate this situation they recommended the following:

1. Ungraded sequences in the primary grades
2. A compensatory preschool year to provide necessary experiential background
3. Postponing instruction in reading
4. Materials and tasks that use operational and concrete stimuli rather than verbal stimuli

One of the most controversial American scholars to write on language, cognition and compensatory education is Arthur Jensen (1973). Jensen believes that the most outstanding features of culturally disadvantaged school children are their deficiency in language and their inability to sustain attention. He also feels that these poor children come to kindergarten or first grade deficient in vidual and auditory discrimination abilities.

In terms of language ability Jensen repeats the often stated view that children from culturally disadvantaged homes have a limited vocabulary, use

fewer compound words and complex sentences than do their advantaged peers. Agreeing with Deutsch, Jensen ascribes these language deficiencies in part to a noisy and crowded home environment.

Two additional and interesting points that Jensen makes is in regard to the ideas of verbal mediation and labeling. Verbal mediation refers to the ability to talk to oneself as an aid to thinking through problem situations (p. 244). Jensen observed that children from poorer homes rarely engaged in this activity. How these telepathic observations were made is not revealed. Labeling refers simply to the ability to name objects. Middle class children do this automatically whereas lower class children, according to Jensen, experience considerable difficulty in this area. Since labeling and verbal mediation facilitate retention and problem solving the child who lacks these skills is at a serious disadvantage.

Above all else Jensen believes that language is inextricably tied to intelligence. His well known article in the Harvard Education Review (1969) set off a storm that thrust him into the center of the language deficit debate. In this article Jensen noted that the various compensatory educational programs in America had failed to produce any lasting improvements in I.Q. scores. After studying countless test results Jensen concluded that (1) the tests are not culturally biased as had been asserted by critics of intelligence tests and (2) the test scores can be separated into genetic and environmental components. When this is done genetic factors emerge as more significant than environmental factors in producing differences among intelligence test scores. According to Jensen the environmental influence upon intelligence is only a threshold variable. Therefore, providing special educational programs cannot measurably improve the intelligence of children whose inherited intellectual abilities are fixed genetically. Jensen specifically singled out the scores of American Negroes as an example of the inherited nature of intelligence. If one accepts Jensen's thesis it supplies a reason for the existence of language deficiencies among minority children.

Diametrically opposed to the views presented so far is another group of scholars who reject the entire notion of language deficiency and cultural deprivation. These individuals believe that it is wrong to approach the study of child language in terms of deficits and weaknesses. They argue that nonstandard speech posesses linguistic strengths the equal of standard English. The foremost champion of this view is William Labov.

Labov (1972) is extremely critical of compensatory education programs because such programs operate from a belief that there is something wrong with the language of poor children. The proponents of these programs contend that the Negro child from the ghetto hears little well formed language, receives limited verbal stimulation and is therefore impovershed in verbal expression. Labov retorts:

> "The concept of verbal deprivation has no basis in social reality; in fact, Negro children in urban ghettos receive a great deal of verbal stimulation, hear more well-formed sentences than middle class children and participate fully in a highly verbal culture (p. 179)."

The myth of the verbally deprived child, according to Labov, has helped to divert our attention away from the real defects of the American educational system. It has also led to theories of genetic inferiority among Negro children. Programs such as those of Bereiter and Engelmann treat poor children as if they had no language of their own. To counteract such programs Labov did his own research on the language of Negro ghetto children. His studies revealed no evidence to support the belief that home environment can cause children to fail in school. Furthermore, the presence or absence of a male figure in the home, which is often cited by Deutsch, has no correlation to academic achievement (p. 182).

One of Labov's main contentions is that earlier investigations into Negro home life involved little direct observation of verbal interactions. Instead, these investigators asked the children to tell them about their homes. Often, Labov notes, the interviewer could not get the child to respond or else the response was only a mumbled "nope", "yep". From this type of interview some researchers generalized that poor children from deprived homes lacked the language capacity to express their thoughts. Labov believes that these investigators mistook subtle sociological and psychological

factors for linguistic deficiences.

In contrast to Bereiter and Engelmann, Labov's research shows that the physical environment of lower class Negroes is highly verbal. Black youths in Harlem, where Labov did his research, engaged in a variety of complex verbal activities which including "sounding, singing, toasts, rifting, louding (p. 192)." He selected a few of these teenages and intensively examined their speech which he labeled Negro Nonstandard English (NNE). From the speech of fifteen (15) year old Larry, a Harlem gang leader, Labov described some of the systematic characteristics of NNE:

1. Negative inversion - (don't nobody know)
2. Negative concord - (you ain't going to no heaven)
3. Invariant "be" - (when they be saying)
4. NNE "it" for SE "there" - (it ain't no heaven)
5. Copula "be" deletion - (if you're good . . . if you bad)
6. Phonological omission of final consonant "r" and medial "l"

For Labov, Larry's speech is systematic, expressive and capable of dealing with complex thoughts in succinct phrases. It is grammatical according to the grammar of NNE which is as rule governed as the grammar of standard English. Here is a sample of dialogue on the subject of God and the existence of an afterlife:

Interviewer: "Well, if there's no heaven, how could there be a hell?"

Larry: "I mean - y-eah. Well, let me tell you, it ain't no hell 'cause this is hell right here, y'know!"

Larry's speech is precise. He does not use meaningless verbiage. There are few repetitions. He is able to deal with abstract and hypothetical ideas. When Larry is asked to suppose that there is a God, then what color would He be, white or black? Larry responds, "He'd be white, man."

Interviewer: "Why?"

Larry: "Why? I'll tell you why. 'Cause the average whitey out here got everything, you dig? And the nigger ain't got shit, y'know? Y'understan'? So-um-for in order for that to happen, you know it ain't no black God that's doin' that bullshit." (p. 196)

Labov contrasts Larry's explicit NNE with the style of standard English spoken by Charles M., a middle class college educated Negro. Charles' language is over particular, vague, verbose and contains many fillers such as "I think." According to Bernstein's description of the elaborated and restricted codes, this is one of the strengths of elaborated or standard English. Labov views it differently. Standard English, he says, is often a matter of style at the expense of meaning (p. 202). Being overly verbose is rewarding in the school system which reflects the biases of standard English. Labov contends that verbosity is not necessarily a quality to be admired or imitated.

The compensatory language programs of Bereiter and Engelmann are particularly offensive to Labov because they ignore the valid strengths of nonstandard dialects. For example, Bereiter and Engelmann cite the expression "they mine"as an instance of how NNE deletes the copula according to the same rules used by standard English for contractions. In other words, "they mine" is NNE for "they're mine" but not for "they are mine." This systematic over generalized use of the deletion rule reveals that speakers of NNE do understand English grammar and phonology. In the same vein Labov takes issue with Bereiter and Engelmann who insist that a child respond to the question, "Where is the squirrel?" by saying "The squirrel is in the tree." rather than simply "In the tree." Labov points out that an elliptical (shortened) answer is perfectly satisfactory and shows appropriate deletion of subject and main verb (p. 204).

Labov also singles out for attack Deutsch's use of the Deprivation Index to classify subjects as deprived. He notes that on Deutsch's scale for educational aspiration of parent, the cut off point for "deprived" is college or less. Thus if a father responds that he wants his son to go to college he receives only one point. In order to get two points he would have to have responded graduate or medical school (p. 213).

Labov's arguments can be summarized as follows. Nonstandard English has a rule governed grammar of its own that is different from that of standard English. This nonstandard language is fully capable of expressing complex, abstract and hypothetical ideas. The environment of the speaker of NNE

is highly verbal and conducive to language development. Finally, compensatory programs to correct nonstandard speech only help to reinforce the existing biases of teachers towards speakers of nonstandard dialect.

Another educator who agrees with Labov is Walter Wolfram (1973). Wolfram views nonstandard dialect as different but not inferior to standard English. To often nonstandard speech has been examined in reference to the norm of middle class speech. The nonconformity of nonstandard speech has often been equated with linguistic retardation. Wolfram feels that every language variety is a self-contained system which is neither superior or deficient (pp. 68-69). All languages are capable of the same conceptualization and can express logical relationships equally well. According to Wolfram, language is learned within the context of the community. The lower class child learns nonstandard speech at the same rate as the middle class child learns standard English.

When Wolfram examined the structure and semantics of nonstandard dialact he concluded, as did Labov, that it was logical and systematic. For example, "the box is blue" becomes "the box blue" in NNE. This common omission of the copula form of "be" does not effect the meaning of the statement. Furthermore, some languages (Russian, Thai and Hungarian) do not have any copula in certain constructions. Another example of the logic behind certain nonstandard constructions is the NNE phrase "his sister hat" for "his sister's hat' (p. 74). The 's is a morphological redundancy and is therefore dropped in NNE. Until school language programs recognize the legitimate rule governed strengths of dialect speech their so-called intervention programs are doomed to fail.

Susan Houston (1973) is a third educator who rejects the idea of language deficiency among speakers of Black dialect. Houston studied the speech of Black children in a rural area of norther Florida. She noticed that these children had two different ways of speaking, one style for school, one style for non-school situations. These variations she termed "register" (p. 81). Register refers to a speech variation which is appropriate to and determined by a given environment or situation. Houston feels that early investigators of child language who labeled Negro children as language

deficient had observed the school register only. This was especially true when the children being studied were black and the investigators were white. Social factors were operating which the investigators misread as linguistic deficiences.

Houston contends that dialects or regional variants of a language differ mainly in phonology. Previous scholars had labeled these phonological differences of nonstandard speech as sytactic deviations (p. 83). For example, the Black child who speaks nonstandard English may drop the final /t/ or /d/ sounds. Also some final consonants /r/ are eliminated while certain vowel sounds are added which do not appear in standard English. Houston argues that since sentence construction does not vary greatly from one language to another it therefore cannot be assumed to vary within a single language, though phonologically it appears to do just that. The sounds that are eliminated and added in nonstandard dialect, however, are done systematically in accordance with the phonological rules of that dialect (p. 84).

In summation, Houston stresses the systematic, logical, rule governed nature of nonstandard Negro speech as a strength to be built upon and not as a deficiency to be disparaged. The universals that exist within all languages apply equally well to dialect variations of thos languages (p. 86). If speakers of nonstandard dialect could be allowed to use their nonschool or natural register in school, Houston feels that teachers would come to recognize the systematic and positive features of this register. They could then begin to build upon it as a means of teaching the language different child.

The strengths of NNE are also discussed in some of the works of Joan and Stephen Baratz (1968, 1972). In her Bi-dialectal task for determining language proficiency Joan Baratz asked Black ghetto children and White middle class children to repeat sentences from standard English and NNE. She found that while Black children were proficient in repeating NNE and had difficulties with standard English sentences, the reverse was true for White children. Her conclusion was that it is unfair to judge the language ability of speakers of NNE on the basis of a standard English model. The

difficulties Black children have with standard English is not an indication of language deficiency but rather a problem of code switching when the second code (standard) has not been as well learned as the first.

The Baratzes agree with Labov, Wolfram and Houston that preschool intervention programs which ignore the logic and strengths of nonstandard dialects create psychological barriers which threaten and inhibit the motivation of Negro children to perform and learn in an alien school environment.

If speakers of a nonstandard dialect are not deficient in language, how then can the high percentage of academic failures among such groups be accounted for? One explanation is that society in general and teachers in particular hold negative attitudes toward speakers of nonstandard speech. Such negative attitudes discourage many young children from performing at the level they are capable of. Kenneth B. Clarke (1963), for example, feels that the teachers attitude toward the child is extremely important in affecting achievement. Clarke, a noted Negro scholar, believes that Black children from the ghetto become "the victim of an educationa self-fulfulling prophecy (p. 150). Teachers expect poor children to have academic difficulties in school. When such children do fail researchers then use these results as proof that poor children cannot learn with their nonstandard language skills. Thus the prophecy is fulfilled.

Kenneth Johnson (1971) of the University of California at Berkeley conducted research into the attitudes of teachers toward nonstandard dialect and concluded that most have little real knowledge yet many possess negative attitudes toward NNE. These negative attitudes on the part of teachers have compounded the already difficult task of teaching children from language different backgrounds.

The classic experimental study on teacher attitude and student achievement was done by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobsen (1968). In their book, Pygmalion in the Classroom, they reported on a series of experiements to test the reactions of rats in relation to the attitudes of the laboratory assistants who handled the animals. The lab assistants handling one of the groups of

rats were told (falsely) that their particular animals had been specially bred for superior intelligence. When the results of the experiment were computed the groups of rats believed to be of superior intelligence by their handlers actually did achieve above average scores. Rosenthal, a social psychologist at Harward, concluded that the methods and attitudes of the lab assistants had directly affected the performance of the animals.

The experiment was then directed at teacher attitudes. The San Francisco Bay area school system was selected because a large percentage of the students were Mexican-Americans, a disadvantaged minority group in California. Rosenthal hoped to prove that the reason many of these children failed in school was because their teachers expected them to fail. The results of the experiment were similar to those of the rat experiments. Those children who had been thought (again falsely) by their teachers to show a marked spurt of achievement during the school year did in fact perform considerably better than their peers. Rosenthal had thus demonstrated that teacher attitude is a powerful influence in determining academic achievement, especially in disadvantaged children.

If the work of Clark, Johnson, Rosenthal and others is accepted, it would appear that earlier researchers took the observed differences among children's language, labeled some of these dialects as being deficient and then preceeded to teach children on the basis of these assumed deficiencies. The theory of elaborated and restricted code differences among social class only added to the negative attitudes of teachers. Only a few people in education raised their voices in opposition. Harold Rosen (1972), a professor at the University of London, bemoans the fact that there is "no English Labov" to counteract the influence of Bernstein upon teachers' attitudes towards language. Robert and Suzenne Shafter (1975), in their work comparing teacher attitudes towards children's language, discovered that many teachers today still believe that nonstandard speech of poorer class children is linguistically inferior to the speech of middle class children. Margaret Knapp (1975), a college teacher, has devised a Language Stereotype Index to test the attitudes of perspective teachers in regards to children who speak a Black dialect. Unfortunately those attitudes have

not changed very much since the work of Rosenthal. Nonstandard speech is still widely misunderstood.

One of the primary misconceptions associated with the language different child is that deficiences in speech automatically produce deficiencies in thought and intelligence. Herbert Ginsburg (1972) of Cornell University feels that there is great confusion even among scholars as to a working definition of intelligence. Ginsburg was one of the experts called upon by Educational Testing Service to administer the Stanford Binet intelligence test and other exams to preschool children as part of the Federal government's evaluation of Project Head Start. Unlike Jensen, Ginsburg believes that cognition is not a matter of environment or class status. The cognitive abilities of the poor and middle class child are the same. Ginsburg puts it this way:

> "There are cognitive universals, modes of language and thought shared by all children (except the retarded and severely emotionally disturbed) regardless of culture or upbringing. At the same time there do exist social-class differences in cognition. Yet the differences are relatively superficial,and one must not make the mistake of calling them deficiencies or considering them analogous to mental retardation." (p. 14)

Intelligence scores have often been used to confirm opinions regarding the limited abilities of children labeled culturally deprived or linquistically deficient. The reasoning goes something like this: a deprived environment produces retarded speech skills which in turn limits the cognitive capacity as shown by the results of I.Q. tests and the lack of school achievement. Ginsbur's research on language and intelligence dispels some of myths concerning the I.Q. test. First, intelligence cannot be measured as a single unit; there are many kinds of intelligence. Second, differences in I.Q. scores do not reflect fundamental differences in intelligence because the tests focus on minor variances and ignore basic similarities. Third, performance on I.Q. tests do not measure the competencies of children. Finally, I.Q. fluctuates from year to year and is not a fixed score (pp. 26-27).

Ginsburg's views of nonstandard dialect parallel those of Labov. He feels that Labov's description of the logic and underlying rules which govern

nonstandard Enslish is supported by research on language universals. Therefore, rather than reject dialect speech or provide remedial instruction, Ginsburg suggests that teachers need to encourage language different children to express themselves in their own dialect.

Though research studies and emperimentation abound in the areas of language, dialect and culture, there have been no recent longitudinal studies tracing the strengths and weaknesses of various dialects as children progress through school. Walter Loban's (1963) excellent eleven year study on the language of children in an Oakland, California district unfortunately failed to provide data comparing middle class and lower class or Black versus White speech patterns. However, his methods point the way for future studies to provide concrete evidence on what specific difficulties the language different child encounters as he precedes from from grade to grade.

The controversy regarding the language deficit theory is far from over. There are still programs operating in the United States and Europe which consider nonstandard dialect a deficient form of language which needs to be corrected. There are also scholars who feel that the entire notion of language deficiencies or cultural deprivation is a creation of racist imaginations. Much valuable work has helped to clarify some of the issues regarding nonstandard speech but much more needs to be done before this knowledge will have a positive affect on teacher attitudes in the classroom. Accepting the language different child is the first step towards understanding and building upon the strengths of nonstandard speech.

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

ON THE DEFICIT THEORY OF

LANGUAGE

Annotated Bibliography

Baratz, Joan C. A bi-dialectal task for determining language proficiency in economically disadvantage Negro children. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1968. (ERIC Document No. ED 020519)

Baratz explores the idea that the language of economically disadvantaged Negro children, though different from standard English, is nevertheless fully developed and systematic. The test she has developed requires the subjects to repeat sentences spoken in standard English and nonstandard Negro dialect. Baratz concludes that tests using standard English as a measure of language development are biased and unreflective of nonstandard language strengths.

Baratz, Stephen & Baratz, Joan C. Early childhood intervention: the social science base of institutional racism. In A. Cashdan & E. Grugeon (Eds.), Language in education. London: The Open University Press, 1972.

This article critically summarizes the various intervention programs, such as Headstart, for operating on a deficit theory of language. According to the Baratzes, preschool intervention programs ignore the linguistic strengths of children and perpetuate negative attitudes regarding children who speak a nonstandard dialect.

Bell, Lorna. Underprivileged underfives. London: Ward Lock Educational, 1972

Bell investigated the difficulties of West Indian and Asian immigrant children in the British school system. She noted what she calls a

"cycle of deprivation." The way to break this cycle is through a variety of preschool intervention programs. Her own program emphasizes special language instruction utilizing in part the Peabody Language Development Kit.

Bereiter, Carl & Engelmann, Seigfried. Teaching disadvantaged children in the preschool. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1966

Bereiter and Engelmann studied young children from disadvantaged homes in and around Chicago, Illinois. From their studies they developed their own radical approach to preschool education. Their program emphasizes a strict academic language curriculum for children ages three to five. The program stresses immediate recall, language drills and repetition of skills until mastered. Their philosophy, based in part on the early work of Basil Bernstein forms the extreme approach to correcting language deficiencies in culturally disadvantaged children. Though very controversial, their program and ideas have had a significant impact on American education.

Bernstein, Basil. Class, codes and control: theoretical studies towards a socialogy of language (Vol. 1). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971

This first volume is a collection of Bernstein's papers dating back to 1958. As such it reveals the early work and theories of Bernstein regarding language, class differences and codes. Bernstein develops his theory of the existence of two distinct social class language codes: the restricted and the elaborated. These code descriptions form the basis for the deficit

theory of language. Many present day compensatory language programs are predicated on the validity of the restricted and elaborated codes as applied to early childhood education programs.

Bloom, Benjamin S., Davis, Allison & Hess, Robert. Compensatory education for cultural deprivation. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965.

This book summarizes the results of a conference on education and cultural deprivation held in 1964 at the University of Chicago. The major contributors to this work were Basil Bernstein, Benjamin Bloom, Erik Erikson, Arthur Jensen and Helen Robinson. The book emphasizes the need for compensatory educational programs to aid the disadvantaged student. It elaborates the traditionally held views on cultural deprivation. An excellent annotated bibliography is also included.

Clark, Kenneth B. Educational stimulation of racially disadvantaged children. In A.H. Passow (Ed.), Education in depressed areas. New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1963.

Clarke dismisses the ideas of culturally disadvantaged and language deficient children. Instead Clarke asserts that the reason many children from urban ghettos fail to achieve academic success is the negative attitudes of teachers and school administrators. The latter have preconceived notions regarding the ability of children from certain backgrounds to perform in school. Clark feels that such attitudes doom the child to failure.

Deutsch, Martin. The disadvantaged child. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1967.

This book brings together Deutsch's research and ideas in three major areas: social environment for learning, cognitive and language factors in disadvantaged children and the role of race and social class in education. The book is lengthy, heavily documented and reflects Deutsch's acceptance of the ideas of Bernstein in regards to the restricted and elaborated codes. Deutsch worked with Negro children in New York City. He places great emphasis on the relationship between home environment and language proficiency. His intervention program focuses on creating an improved preschool environment that will provide Negro children from disadvantaged homes with some of the advantages of their middle class peers.

Gahagan, D.M. & Gahagan, G.A. Talk reform. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970

The Gahagans describe a language enrichment program based upon the elaborated and restricted code theory of Bernstein. Their subjects were taken from among the working class immigrant children of London. In the book they outline games, activities and methods for training the restricted code user to achieve mastery in the elaborated code. The language training program of the Gahagans parallels the work done in America by Bereiter and Engelmann.

Ginsburg, Herbert. The myth of the deprived child. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972.

Ginsburg brings together research in child development, psychology and

linguistics to clarify the alleged language deficiencies of poor children. He examines the role of intelligence tests, compensatory education programs and the misconceptions held regarding intellectual development and language abilities of children. His overall conclusion is that we should not emphasize remedial language programs based upon a deficit model of language. Instead work from the language strengths of children and encourage language use in all its various forms. Ginsburg's book is an excellent secondary source introduction to the whole subject of cultural deprivation and language deficiency.

Houston, Susan H. A reexamination of some assumptions about the language of the disadvantaged child. In John F. Savage (Ed.), Linguistics for teachers. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1973.

Houston examines the various theories concerning the language differences of culturally disadvantaged children. Her own work with Negro children in a rural area of northern Florida led her to disagree with and criticize the assumptions of Bernstein, Bereiter and others. Houston believes that earlier investigations of child language among the poorer classes reached erroneous conclusions by being misled by stylistic variations of language which were dependent upon social setting. These stylistic variations or "register" explain the differences between a child's speech at home and at school.

Jensen, Arther. How much can we boost I.Q. and scholastic achievement? Harvard Educational Review, 1969, 39, 1-123.

This is the very controversial article which thrust Jensen into the fore-

front of the hereditary versus environmental debate. On the basis of extensive research Jensen concludes that the reason compensatory educational programs have failed to boost intelligence scores for Negroes is because the latter are genetically inferior in intellectual ability. For Jensen, environmental factors account for only a miniman amount of the differences he notes among intelligence scores.

Jensen, Arthur. The culturally disadvantaged: Psychological and educational aspects. In E.E. Ekwall (Ed.) Psychological factors in the teaching of reading. Ohio: Charles Merrill Co., 1973.

In this article Jensen reviews his work on I.Q. theory, language deficiency and compensatory education programs. Bernstein's early work is discussed as is the theories of Bereiter. For Jensen, disadvantaged children lack the language skills and attention span necessary for success in school.

Johnson, Kenneth R. Teacher's attitude toward the nonstandard Negro dialect - let's change it. Elementary English, 1971, 48, 176-84.

Johnson reviews the research on teacher attitudes towards speakers of dialect English. Johnson feels that many teachers exhibit a negative attitude toward nonstandard dialects. These attitudes are based on the false assumptions that nonstandard dialects are somehow linguistically inferior to standard English.

Knapp, Margaret O. Black dialect and reading: what teachers need to know. Journal of Reading, 19, Dec. 1975.

In this brief article Knapp discusses language patterns, dialects, and

reading as taught on the college level to perspective teachers. She examines teachers' attitudes regarding the language of culturally different children. Included in the article are descriptions of the Language Stereotype Index and the Psycholinguistic Attitude Study, both of which assess teacher attitudes towards language differences.

Labov, William. The logic of nonstandard English. In Pier P. Giglioli (Ed.), Language and social context. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972.

In this well known article Labov reveals the fallacy of the language deficit theory. He attacks the assumptions that Negro children from slum neighborhoods are non-verbal and unable to communicate ideas. Labov relies heavily on taped interviews with Negroes living in Harlem, a section of Manhattan. His analysis of these language samples shows the systematic and meaningful linguistic units of what has been disparagingly referred to as Nonstandard Negro English (NNE). Labov's article stands as the major reply to the works of Bereiter, Engelmann, Deutsch and Jensen.

Loban, Walter. The language of elementary school children. National Council of teachers of English. Research Report No. 1. Champaigne, Illinois, 1963.

Loban's article reports on an exhaustive longitudinal study of children. language. The study involved 338 children and traced their language development from kindergarten through grade six. The study is technical and informative. Unfortunately Loban does not analyze the children's language according to social class or race in any great depth.

Rosen, Harold. Language and class - a critical look at the theories of Basil Bernstein. Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1972.

Rosen is a professor at the University of London who takes issue with the ideas of Basil Bernstein regarding language and social class. He criticizes Bernstein's work on the grounds that it implies cognitive defects in users of a restrictive code. Rosen relies heavily on the work of Labov to refute the theories of Bernstein.

Rosenthal, Robert and Jacobsen, Lenore. Pygmalion in the classroom: teacher expectiations and pupils' intellectual development. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

This is the seminal work on the devastating and pervasive effect of teacher attitudes upon student achievement. In a classic study described here the I.Q. scores of Mexican-American children from a poor section of San Francisco showed significant gains as a direct result of teacher attitudes. Rosenthal and Jacobsen give experimental proof to the concept of the self fulfilling prophecy in regards to teacher expectations and pupil performance.

Shafer, Robert E. and Shafer, Suzanne M. Teacher attitudes towards children language in West Germany and England. Comparative Education, 1975, 11, 43-61.

This article provides cogent evidence that the influence of Bernstein and the belief in the existence of restricted and elaborated codes is a part of the educational scene today. The article is based on personal interviews with teachers in West Germany and England. A significant

number of those teachers interviewed subscribed to the belief that the children of working class parents are deficient in language skills. Most of them saw this deficiency as stemming from environmental factors.

Taba, Hilda and Elkins, Deborah. Teaching strategies for the culturally disadvantaged. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966.

This book describes curriculum approaches in grades six, seven and eight. It is geared for teachers of inner city Black children. Taba and Elkins describe the linguistic inabilities of poor children and point to environmental factors as the cause. They recommend preschool compensatory education and a de-emphasis on reading in the primary grades for language deficient children.

Wolfram, Walter. The nature of nonstandard dialect divergence. In John F. Savage (Ed.), Linguistics for teachers. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1973.

Wolfram argues that nonstandard dialect should be accepted as different but not inferior to standard English. He emphasizes that a language different model is equally capable of the variety, conceptualization and expression of logical relationships as that of standard English. Language should be viewed within the context of the community of which it is a part. Wolfram's analysis of the adequacy of nonstandard dialect is best contrasted with Deutsch's views on the negative effect of home environment upon language development.